

1    WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

2    3    4    1    1. A shipping management computer system, said shipping management  
5    computer system programmed to:

6         apply, in response to a request by any particular user of a plurality of users, a set of  
7         billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to a single billing option preference  
8         input by the particular requesting user, wherein each user accesses the computer system over  
9         a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer  
device having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network.

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11         2. A shipping management computer system, said shipping management  
12         computer system programmed to:

13                 identify, in response to a request by any particular user of a plurality of users, each  
14         carrier from a plurality of carriers that supports a particular billing option preference input by  
15         the particular requesting user for shipping a particular parcel, wherein each user accesses the  
16         computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each  
17         user client computer device having an individual electronic connection to the global  
18         communications network.

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20         3. A shipping management computer system, said shipping management  
21         computer system programmed to:

22                 collect as a billing option preference for each particular user of a plurality of users a  
23         user input from the particular user of an identification of a billing option preference for  
24         parcels to be shipped by the particular user, wherein each user accesses the computer system  
25         over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client  
26         computer having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network;  
27         and

28                 store in a database a record corresponding to each particular user, said record  
29         comprising an identifier for the particular user and the billing option preference for the

1 particular user.

3           4. The shipping management computer system of claim 3, said shipping  
4 management computer system further programmed to:

5           collect as parcel specifications for a particular parcel user input from the particular  
6 user wherein the parcel specifications comprising at least one of: a package type, a set of  
7 package dimensions, or a package weight of the particular parcel;

9           5. The shipping management computer system of claim 4, said shipping  
10 management computer system further programmed to:

11           apply a set of billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to the billing  
12 option preference and parcel specifications input by the particular user.

14           6. The shipping management computer system of claim 5, said shipping  
15 management computer system further programmed to:

16           determine for each of the plurality of carriers whether the carrier supports the billing  
17 option preference according to the billing option rules for the particular carrier as applied to  
18 the parcel specifications for the particular parcel and the billing option preference input by  
19 the particular user.

21           7. The computer system of claim 6, said computer system further programmed  
22 to:

23           calculate a shipping rate for shipping the particular parcel to be shipped by the  
24 particular user for each of a plurality of services offered by each of the plurality of carriers  
25 according to a set of billing option rules for each carrier, and according to a set of pricing  
26 rules for each service offered by each carrier as applied to the parcel specifications for the  
27 particular parcel and the billing option preference input by the particular user.

29           8. A method using a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of

1        parcels shipped by any one of a plurality of carriers, the method comprising:  
2                applying, in response to a request by any particular user of a plurality of users, a set of  
3        billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to a single billing option preference  
4        input by the particular requesting user, wherein each user accesses the computer system over  
5        a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client computer  
6        device having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network.

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8                9. A method using a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of  
9        parcels shipped by any one of a plurality of carriers, the method comprising:

10                identifying, in response to a request by any particular user of a plurality of users, each  
11        carrier from a plurality of carriers that supports a particular billing option preference input by  
12        the particular requesting user for shipping a particular parcel, wherein each user accesses the  
13        computer system over a global communications network using a client computer device, each  
14        user client computer device having an individual electronic connection to the global  
15        communications network.

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17                10. A method using a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of  
18        parcels shipped by any one of a plurality of carriers, the method comprising:

19                collecting as a billing option preference for each particular user of a plurality of users  
20        a user input from the particular user of an identification of a billing option preference for  
21        parcels to be shipped by the particular user, wherein each user accesses the computer system  
22        over a global communications network using a client computer device, each user client  
23        computer having an individual electronic connection to the global communications network;  
24        and

25                storing in a database a record corresponding to each particular user, said record  
26        comprising an identifier for the particular user and the billing option preference for the  
27        particular user.

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29                11. The method of claim 10, said method further comprising:

1           collecting as parcel specifications for a particular parcel user input from the particular  
2        user wherein the parcel specifications comprising at least one of: a package type, a set of  
3        package dimensions, or a package weight of the particular parcel;

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5           12.     The method of claim 11, said method further comprising:

6               applying a set of billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to the billing  
7        option preference and parcel specifications input by the particular user.

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9           13.     The method of claim 12, said method further comprising:

10              determining for each of the plurality of carriers whether the carrier supports the  
11        billing option preference according to the billing option rules for the particular carrier as  
12        applied to the parcel specifications for the particular parcel and the billing option preference  
13        input by the particular user.

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15           14.     The method of claim 13, said method further comprising:

16              calculating a shipping rate for shipping the particular parcel to be shipped by the  
17        particular user for each of a plurality of services offered by each of the plurality of carriers  
18        according to a set of billing option rules for each carrier, and according to a set of pricing  
19        rules for each service offered by each carrier as applied to the parcel specifications for the  
20        particular parcel and the billing option preference input by the particular user.

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22           15.     A computer program product embodying computer program instructions for  
23        execution by a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels shipped by  
24        any one of a plurality of carriers, the computer program product comprising:

25              a set of program instructions for applying, in response to a request by any particular  
26        user of a plurality of users, a set of billing option rules for each of a plurality of carriers to a  
27        single billing option preference input by the particular requesting user, wherein each user  
28        accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client computer  
29        device, each user client computer device having an individual electronic connection to the

1 global communications network.

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3       16. A computer program product embodying computer program instructions for  
4 execution by a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels shipped by  
5 any one of a plurality of carriers, the computer program product comprising:

6           a set of program instructions for identifying, in response to a request by any particular  
7 user of a plurality of users, each carrier from a plurality of carriers that supports a particular  
8 billing option preference input by the particular requesting user for shipping a particular  
9 parcel, wherein each user accesses the computer system over a global communications  
10 network using a client computer device, each user client computer device having an  
11 individual electronic connection to the global communications network.

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13       17. A computer program product embodying computer program instructions for  
14 execution by a computer system for managing shipping of a plurality of parcels shipped by  
15 any one of a plurality of carriers, the computer program product comprising:

16           a set of program instructions for collecting as a billing option preference for each  
17 particular user of a plurality of users a user input from the particular user of an identification  
18 of a billing option preference for parcels to be shipped by the particular user, wherein each  
19 user accesses the computer system over a global communications network using a client  
20 computer device, each user client computer having an individual electronic connection to the  
21 global communications network; and

22           a set of program instructions for storing in a database a record corresponding to each  
23 particular user, said record comprising an identifier for the particular user and the billing  
24 option preference for the particular user.

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26       18. The computer program product of claim 17, said computer program product  
27 further comprising:

28           a set of program instructions for collecting as parcel specifications for a particular  
29 parcel user input from the particular user wherein the parcel specifications comprising at least

1 one of: a package type, a set of package dimensions, or a package weight of the particular  
2 parcel;

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4 19. The computer program product of claim 18, said computer program product  
5 further comprising:

6 a set of program instructions for applying a set of billing option rules for each of a  
7 plurality of carriers to the billing option preference and parcel specifications input by the  
8 particular user.

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10 20. The computer program product of claim 19, said computer program product  
11 further comprising:

12 a set of program instructions for determining for each of the plurality of carriers  
13 whether the carrier supports the billing option preference according to the billing option rules  
14 for the particular carrier as applied to the parcel specifications for the particular parcel and the  
15 billing option preference input by the particular user.

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17 21. The computer program product of claim 20, said computer program product  
18 further comprising:

19 a set of program instructions for calculating a shipping rate for shipping the particular  
20 parcel to be shipped by the particular user for each of a plurality of services offered by each  
21 of the plurality of carriers according to a set of billing option rules for each carrier, and  
22 according to a set of pricing rules for each service offered by each carrier as applied to the  
23 parcel specifications for the particular parcel and the billing option preference input by the  
24 particular user.

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